

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method for facilitating supplier qualification
2 and quality management functions in a communications network
3 environment, comprising:

4 receiving at a host system a request by a user system
5 to execute supplier qualification and quality management
6 software, wherein said software comprises a selection
7 module, a qualification module and a quality module, and
8 wherein said host system and said user system are connected
9 to said communications network;

10 executing said software at the host system;

11 sending results of said execution of said software to
12 the user system;

13 receiving input at the host system from the user system
14 in response to said execution of said software; and

15 providing the user system with output generated as a
16 result of said execution of said software.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said selection module
2 comprises:

3 supplier selection; and
4 supplier audit management.

1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier
2 selection comprises:

3 retrieving at least one potential supplier based on
4 specific technical requirements.

1 4. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier audit
2 management comprises:

3 accessing audit data for a potential supplier;
4 analyzing said audit data; and
5 approving said potential supplier based on results of
6 said analysis of said audit data.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said audit data
2 comprises:

3 audit schedules;
4 a list of completed audits; and
5 audit reports.

1 6. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier
2 selection is performed using a development toolkit network
3 software application.

1 7. The method of claim 2 wherein said supplier audit
2 management is performed using a quality information network
3 software application.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein said qualification
2 module comprises:
3 technology qualification; and
4 part qualification.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein said technology
2 qualification comprises:
3 accessing technology survey data for a potential
4 supplier;
5 analyzing said technology survey data; and
6 qualifying the technology of said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said technology survey
8 data.

1 10. The method of claim 8 wherein said technology
2 qualification is performed using a development toolkit
3 network software application.

1 11. The method of claim 8 wherein said part
2 qualification comprises:
3 accessing part qualification data for a potential
4 supplier;
5 analyzing said part qualification data; and
6 qualifying proposed part from said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said part qualification
8 data.

1 12. The method of claim 8 wherein said part
2 qualification is performed using a part qualification
3 software application.

1 13. The method of claim 1 wherein said quality module
2 comprises:
3 process change management;
4 supplier quality management; and
5 tracking problems in a log.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein said process change
2 management comprises:
3 accessing supplier initiated proposed changes to a
4 qualified part;
5 analyzing said proposed changes; and
6 accepting said proposed changes based on results of
7 said analysis of said proposed changes.

1 15. The method of claim 13 wherein said process change
2 management is performed using a process change notification
3 software application.

1 16. The method of claim 13 wherein said supplier
2 quality management comprises:
3 accessing quality metrics provided by a supplier;
4 analyzing said quality metrics; and
5 notifying said supplier of quality issues based on
6 results of said analysis of said quality metrics.

1 17. The method of claim 13 wherein said supplier
2 quality management is performed using a process change
3 notification software application.

1 18. The method of claim 13 wherein said tracking
2 problems in a log comprises:
3 opening a new problem report;
4 accessing said open problem report;
5 closing said open problem report;
6 notifying interested parties of status of said problem
7 report;
8 generating a report that summarizes said status of a
9 collection of said problem reports.

1 19. The method of claim 13 wherein said tracking
2 problems in a log is performed using a problem log software
3 application.

1 20. The method of claim 1 wherein said user system is
2 used by a supplier and access is restricted to said supplier
3 data.

1 21. The method of claim 1 wherein said user system is
2 used by a supplier and access is restricted to supplier
3 application functions.

1 22. A system for facilitating supplier qualification
2 and quality management functions in a communications network
3 environment, comprising:

4 a host system including a web server, an applications
5 server, and a database server;

6 at least one data storage device in communication with
7 said host system;

8 supplier qualification and quality management software
9 application being executed by said host system;

10 a firewall in communication with said host system;

11 a workstation; and

12 a computer network connecting the host system to the
13 workstation; wherein information inputted into the
14 workstation is transferred to the host system and made
15 available to the supplier qualification and quality
16 management software application.

1 23. A storage medium encoded with machine-readable
2 computer program code for facilitating supplier
3 qualification and quality management functions in a
4 communications network environment, the storage medium
5 including instructions for causing an enterprise system to
6 implement a method comprising:

7 receiving at a host system a request by a user system
8 to execute supplier qualification and quality management
9 software, wherein said software comprises a selection
10 module, a qualification module and a quality module, and
11 wherein said host system and said user system are connected
12 to said communications network;

13 executing said software at the host system;

14 sending results of said execution of said software to
15 the user system;

16 receiving input at the host system from the user system
17 in response to said execution of said software; and

18 providing the user system with output generated as a
19 result of said execution of said software.

1 24. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said
2 selection module comprises:

3 supplier selection; and

4 supplier audit management.

1 25. The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said
2 supplier selection comprises:
3 retrieving at least one potential supplier based on
4 specific technical requirements.

1 26. The storage medium claim 24 wherein said supplier
2 audit management comprises:
3 accessing audit data for a potential supplier;
4 analyzing said audit data; and
5 approving said potential supplier based on results of
6 said analysis of said audit data.

1 27. The storage medium of claim 26, wherein said audit
2 data comprises:
3 audit schedules;
4 a list of completed audits; and
5 audit reports.

1 28. The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said
2 supplier selection is performed using a development toolkit
3 network software application.

1 29. The storage medium of claim 24 wherein said
2 supplier audit management is performed using a quality
3 information network software application.

1 30. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said
2 qualification module comprises:
3 technology qualification; and
4 part qualification.

1 31. The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said
2 technology qualification comprises:
3 accessing technology survey data for a potential
4 supplier;
5 analyzing said technology survey data; and
6 qualifying the technology of said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said technology survey
8 data.

1 32. The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said
2 technology qualification is performed using a development
3 toolkit network software application.

1 33. The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said part
2 qualification comprises:
3 accessing part qualification data for a potential
4 supplier;
5 analyzing said part qualification data; and
6 qualifying proposed part from said potential supplier
7 based on results of said analysis of said part qualification
8 data.

1 34. The storage medium of claim 30 wherein said part
2 qualification is performed using a part qualification
3 software application.

1 35. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said
2 quality module comprises:
3 process change management;
4 supplier quality management; and
5 tracking problems in a log.

1 36. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 process change management comprises:
3 accessing supplier initiated proposed changes to a
4 qualified part;
5 analyzing said proposed changes; and
6 accepting said proposed changes based on results of
7 said analysis of said proposed changes.

1 37. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 process change management is performed using a process
3 change notification software application.

1 38. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 supplier quality management comprises:
3 accessing quality metrics provided by a supplier;
4 analyzing said quality metrics; and
5 notifying said supplier of quality issues based on
6 results of said analysis of said quality metrics.

1 39. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 supplier quality management is performed using a process
3 change notification software application.

1 40. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 tracking problems in a log comprises:
3 opening a new problem report;
4 accessing said open problem report;
5 closing said open problem report;
6 notifying interested parties of status of said problem
7 report;
8 generating a report that summarizes said status of a
9 collection of said problem reports.

1 41. The storage medium of claim 35 wherein said
2 tracking problems in a log is performed using a problem log
3 software application.

1 42. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said user
2 system is used by a supplier and access is restricted to
3 said supplier data.

1 43. The storage medium of claim 23 wherein said user
2 system is used by a supplier and access is restricted to
3 supplier application functions.